

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)****Grant Recipient: North Pole****Project Title:****Project Type:** Planning and Research

# North Pole - Environmental Assessment for Railroad Realignment and Expansion

**State Funding Requested: \$1,000,000****House District: 11 / F**

One-Time Need

**Brief Project Description:**

This appropriation will be used to fund the environmental assessment of the North Pole Rail Realignment project which places the Mile 9 - North Pole as the logical Phase 1 of the ARR realignment project in the Fairbanks area.

**Funding Plan:****Total Cost of Project: \$17,000,000**

	<u>Funding Secured</u>		<u>Other Pending Requests</u>		<u>Anticipated Future Need</u>	
	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>
Federal Funds	\$16,000,000	ongoing				
Total	\$16,000,000					

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

This is a request for \$1 million in general fund dollars to complete an environmental assessment necessary to break away from the complete EIS being conducted by the Federal Railroad Administration the re-alignment of the railroad from North Pole to 9 mile Richardson. This section of the railroad in the Fairbanks area has been designated by all parties as having independent utility and would remove almost half of the 48 at-grade crossings.

One of the most vital intersections needing to be addressed is located at Old Richardson Highway and 8th Avenue (across the road from NPHS Boulevard). Each school day, over 30 buses must individually stop between the Old Richardson and the railroad tracks as they commute between North Pole High School and the North Pole Middle School., while other traffic must navigate the intersection around them. That traffic includes parents, teachers, staff, young drivers, regular highway traffic, and 18-wheeled commercial tankers hauling oil, gasoline, and jet fuel from Flint Hills Refinery. Two or more ARR fuel-tanker trains to and from the North Pole Refinery transport an average of fifty tanker cars in the winter and up to 120 tanker cars in the summer on a daily basis. Moving the railroad to the dyke along the Tanana River will mitigate the likelihood of accidents.

The Alaska Railroad Corporation has already spent \$16 million to do an environmental impact study on the railroad realignment project from the Parks Highway southwest of the University of Alaska campus down to Delta Junction, approximately 80 miles of rail. All parties involved – state and local government and the military have agreed the 9 mile to North Pole segment should be Phase 1. ARR has indicated they want support outside of the Alaska Railroad Corporation. The revenue base in North Pole is limited but the advantages to the realignment are beneficial to not just North Pole but the

## Total Project Snapshot Report

FY 2011 Capital Budget

TPS Report 52825v1

entire state, including Ted Stevens International Airport which is a major purchaser of jet fuel from Flint Hills. Flint Hills is the source of 45% of the ARR's freight revenues.

The completion of the environmental assessment will make the project ready for construction.

### Project Timeline:

Obtain funding July 1, 2009

Contract for environmental assessment Winter of 2009

Completion of environmental assessment

### Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Alaska Railroad Corporation

### Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Bill Butler

Address: 125 Snowman Lane  
North Pole, AK 99705

Phone Number: (907)488-2281

Email: bill@northpolealaska.com

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☒ Yes ☐ No